

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 00907 281522 Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0907

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BB (BARROW ERROL W.)

SUBJ: PLANS OF PRIME MINISTER BARROW TO TEACH AT FLORIDA
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FROM AMBASSADOR

1. IN LETTER DATED APRIL 4 TO JOHN BURKE, CAR, I DESCRIBED
DETAILS OF PRIME MINISTER BARROW' S CLOSELY- HELD PLAN TO
TAKE LEAVE AND TO TEACH AT FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
UPON INVITATION OF PRESIDENT CHARLES E. PERRY. BARROW
HAS NOT MENTIONED HIS PLAN SINCE, NOR HAVE THERE BEEN ANY
RUMORS ABOUT IT EITHER IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS NOR BY MEDIA.

2. ON JUNE 25 DURING A PRE- DINNER CONVERSATION WITH
BARROW, WHILE NO OTHERS WITHIN HEARING DISTANCE, I ASKED
HIM WHETHER HE STILL PLANNED TO TAKE WHAT HE CALLS HIS
" SABBATICAL." HE SAID THAT INDEED HE DID; THAT HE WAS NOW
AWAITING ONLY A REPLY FROM PERRY AS TO TIMING, ETC. AT
THAT MOMENT IN THE CONVERSATION WE WERE APPROACHED BY THE
GOVERNOR- GENERAL AND BY PRINCE CHARLES (THE PRINCE OF WALES,
HERE UNOFFICIALLY AS AN OFFICER OF HMS MINERVA) AND BARROW
WENT ON TO SAY, TO THEIR OBVIOUS AMAZEMENT THAT, ALTHOUGH
PROBABLY NO ONE BELIEVED IT, HE PLANNED TO TEACH IN THE U. S.
FOLLOWING HIS MEETINGS IN CANADA AND A TRIP TO AFRICA LATER
IN THE SUMMER, AND THAT HE EXPECTED HE WOULD REMAIN THERE FOR
THE FIRST SEMESTER. HE ANSWERED FURTHER QUESTIONS OF THE
GOVERNOR- GENERAL ABOUT WHAT HE WOULD TEACH, ETC. ALONG THE LINES
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I DESCRIBED IN APRIL 4 LETTER WHICH RECIPIENTS THIS TEL SHOULD NOW SEE. HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN THE IDEA FIRST BY PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU OF CANADA AND PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW OF SINGAPORE, WHO HAD TOLD HIM DURING ONE OF THE COMMONWEALTH MEETINGS THAT NO ONE SHOULD TRY TO DO THE JOB THAT HE HAS BEEN DOING FOR ELEVEN YEARS WITHOUT A DISTINCT CHANGE IN DUTIES AND CLIMATE WHICH WOULD RETURN HIM FRESH AND RESTED TO HIS JOB AGAIN. HE ALSO REPEATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME ABOUT THE OTHER TWO UNIVERSITIES WITH WHICH HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH AND WHY HE HAD CHOSEN FLORIDA. HE CONCLUDED HIS CONVERSATION ON THIS SUBJECT BY TURNING TO ME AGAIN AND SAYING, " I HOPE IT CAN BE ARRANGED THAT I WON' T HAVE TO BE SURROUNDED BY YOUR SECRET SERVICE OFFICIALS THE ENTIRE TIME I AM IN THE STATES." I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS SURE SOME SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT COULD BE MADE WHEN HIS PLANS WERE FINALIZED WITH REGARD TO DATES, ETC.

3. APRIL 4 LETTER DESCRIBED SOME OF THE POSSIBLE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BARROW' S POTENTIAL ABSENCE FROM BARBADOS WHICH REMAIN UNCHANGED. DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS BARROW SEEMS TO HAVE LOST SOME WEIGHT (NOT MUCH) AND LOOKS THE PICTURE OF HEALTH. I WATCHED HIM CAREFULLY DURING AN ADDRESS HE MADE 22 ND AT OPENING OF I. P. C. BARBADOS LTD. FACTORY (INTERNATIONAL PLAYTEX) AND AT DINNER 25 TH. HE SEEMS MUCH LESS FRUSTRATED AND TESTY THAN HE DID A FEW MONTHS AGO. HIS ONLY DAUGHTER, LESLIE, PLANS TO BE MARRIED TO AN AMERICAN IN NEW JERSEY IN JULY AND BOTH THE PM AND MRS. BARROW PLAN TO ATTEND THAT FUNCTION, AFTER THEY HAVE RETURNED FROM THE BAHAMAS INDEPENDENCE WHICH FOLLOWS CLOSELY ON THE HEELS OF THE JULY 4 SIGNING OF THE GEORGETOWN ACCORDS IN TRINIDAD. IT LOOKS TO ME AS THOUGH HE PLANS TO BE AWAY FROM BARBADOS FOR A MUCH LONGER TIME THAN HE WILL BE PRESENT FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS. IT IS STILL INCREDIBLE TO ME THAT IN THIS LAND OF RAMPANT RUMOR, NO HINT OF THESE PLANS HAS YET EMERGED IN PUBLIC OR EVEN IN OTHER PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS HELD BY EMBASSY OFFICERS. BELIEVE THE RUMORED CABINET CHANGES (BRIDGE-TOWN 867) MUST BE UPCOMING FAIRLY SOON.

ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION BEFORE BARROW ASKS ME AGAIN AS TO HOW SECURITY REGULATIONS FOR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT COULD BE ARRANGED IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

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